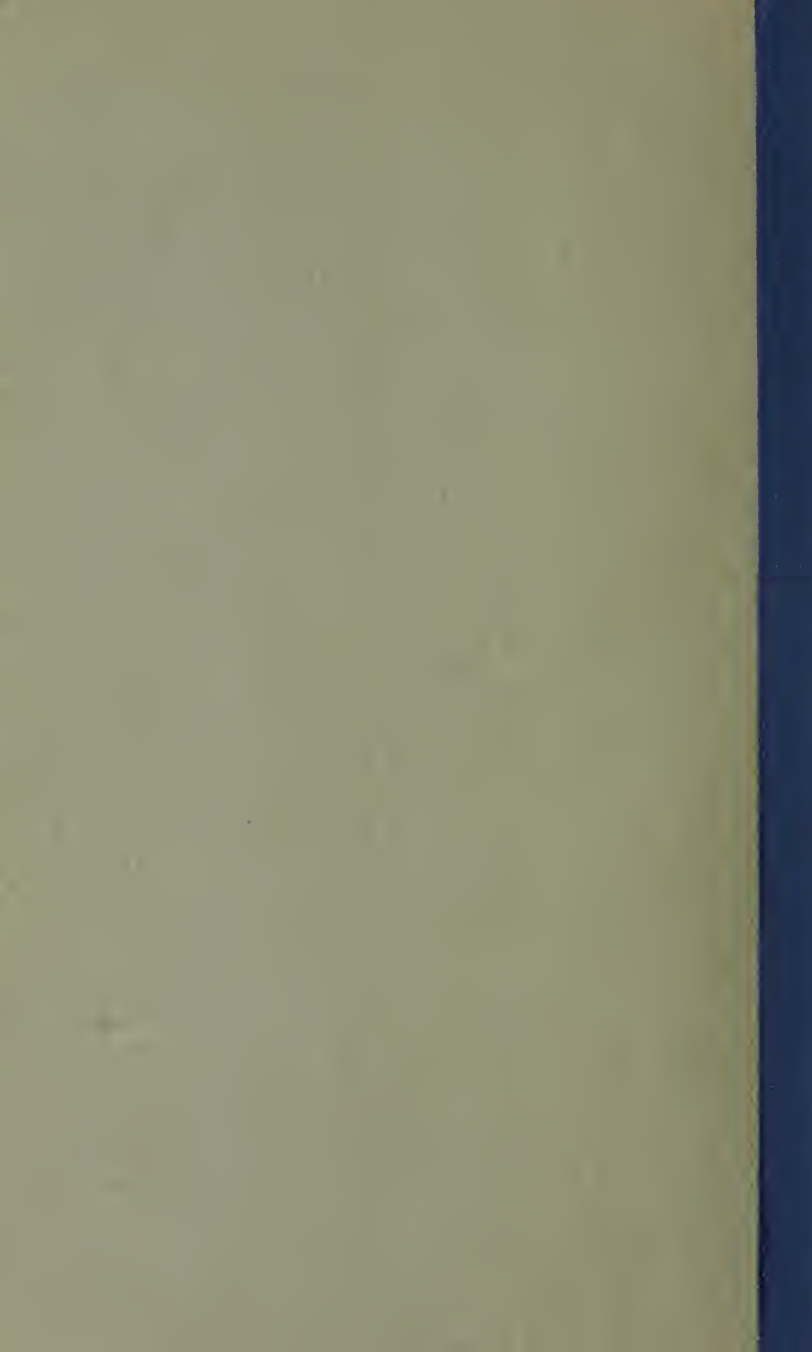


HA

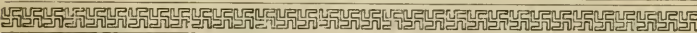
S

Skelly, Andrew Maria
The Celtic race.





HA
S



By Rev. A. M. Skelly, O. P.



*Being a Lecture Delivered Before the
Faculty and Pupils*

of

AQUINAS ACADEMY

Conducted by the Dominican Sisters

Tacoma, Washington, U. S. A.

$$\frac{428056}{30.9.44}$$

Permissu Superiorum

TO THE READER

One of the results of the great world war that has just closed, is to awaken a widespread, not to say, a general interest, concerning the origin and vicissitudes of the different races that go to make up the human family.

The following is an attempt to clear up the origin and early history of perhaps the most interesting of all the races.

Many have written on the same theme before now ; and even great names in the antiquarian world have worked upon it, but, in my judgment, with only partial success. One of the causes of this was that they set themselves to the treatment of the question with preconceived notions coming from religious, philological, and other kindred studies.

As a result, these theorists succeeded only in leaving it more involved than it was before.

In the following paper we do not propose to ourselves to straighten out all the difficulties that beset the question ; but we do hope to be able to point out the quarter where truth lies, and to enlighten the general reader on a subject of which he was perhaps wholly ignorant before. Should we do so, we feel that we shall be rewarded for the labor expended, a labor which was to us one of love and interest.

THE AUTHOR.

THE CELTIC RACE

CHAPTER I

The Culte Celtique

One of the subjects that is occupying the attention of the learned world in our days and to which scholars are devoting themselves with considerable care and alacrity, is Celticism.

What remain of Celtic history, language, literature, and antiquities, are being studied and discussed in every centre of learning throughout Europe and the New World. The pages of several European reviews are devoted largely to the end of bringing to light what can be known concerning the Celtic peoples, and their relations with, and the influence they exercised upon early civilization in Europe.

Many learned men from the German, French, and Scandinavian universities have gone over to Ireland in recent years to study the language, customs, and antiquities of our mother country, and, thus equip themselves the better for a thorough investigation of the past civilization of the Celtic peoples of Continental Europe.

It will interest you, my dear auditors, most of whom are of Irish origin, and who, moreover, claim to be of the old Celtic stock, to hear something of the Celts, of the part they played in the world's history in the far off and distant past.

Who Were the Celts?

To this effect I will content myself with answering a few questions which naturally occur to the mind of every earnest student of antiquity—Who were the Celts? Where did they come from? When did they first appear in history? What countries of Europe or Asia did they formerly occupy? What were their characteristics as distinguished from other peoples? What of their migrations—their conquests—their struggles with other ancient peoples—their final overthrow and disappearance in great part as a distinct people from the field of later history?

Well, in order to answer these several questions, I must take your minds back to a period anterior to the dawn of history, and to far off Eastern countries, where they played their part on the stage of life when the world was in its youth.

There, it may be, some five, six, seven, or more thousand years ago we must look for the cradle-land of that famous race who left such traces on the history of the world in ancient times, who gave place names to the localities in half the countries of Europe, and whose blood mingles with the blood of other races in half the peoples of Europe, as well as of the populations formed from them in the new world, today.

A Branch of the Hindu-European Family

First of all, it is established, from their traditions, their physiognomy, and especially from their language, that the Celts are a branch of the great Hindu-European family. From this great stock have descended not only nearly all the races that today people Europe and the new countries, but also several Asiatic peoples, notably, the Persians, the Armenians, the Afghans, the inhabitants of Northern India, as well as most of the peoples of Asia-Minor.

I have said that the Celts are shown to have belonged to the Hindu-European race, especially by their language; for, though the characteristics and physiognomy of a people go a good way in establishing their identity—though this identity is still further proved by their traditions; yet, the great criterion as a rule relied upon by ethnologists is the language they employ.

And now as to the language—When philologists first set themselves to examine and compare the languages spoken by the different races that people the earth, one of the first things that struck them was the fact that these languages fell into groups which had a certain family resemblance to one another; while, at the same time, they showed only a very remote relationship, or, none at all, to other groups of languages outside their own particular group, or family.

Thus we have the Hindu-European group of languages—the Semitic group, the Touranian group, and others, and by a natural deduction they inferred that the

peoples speaking tongues belonging to a certain language group, however they might differ in present characteristics, on religion, or locality, are, as a rule, descended from a somewhat kindred stock, and at one time peopled the same common country.

The Philological School

Here, however, agreement ends, and antiquarians and ethnologists are divided into two categories or schools. If we were to answer in the thought of the former of these schools, I would take you to a far off Eastern country watered by the great rivers the Sur Daria and the Amu Daria—the Oxus and the Jaxartes of the ancients. There in their Aryan home to the east of the Caspian Sea they would have us look for the cradle land of those races many thousand years ago. They would have us believe that seven distinct migrations went forth from the parent home, as swarms of bees go forth successively from the mother hive, each carrying with it the traditions, religious, social, and political; as well as the language spoken by the mother nation; differing, however, from the ones that went before, or that followed after, according to the changes brought about by natural development, or, by the intercommunication of the race with other races speaking a different tongue, in the course of successive ages.

Alleged Aryan Colonies

One of the earliest of these colonies, they say, crossed the snow-clad Hymelays and poured down on the plains of India. Their language was called the Sanscrit, and its modern dialects are the Hindu, the Hindustani, the Bangali, and the Pali.

Another colony entered Persia, and the language they spoke was called the Zend, from which is derived the modern Persian.

Another made their way to Central Europe. They spoke the Celtic, and they are known as Celts: and the languages descended from them are the Irish or Gaelic: the Manx, which is but a Gaelic dialect; the Gaelic Scotch, another Irish dialect; the Welsh, the Breton, etc.

Another settled in Greece, speaking the Greek language. A fourth, in Italy, speaking the Latin, from which

are derived the Italian, the French, the Spanish and the Portuguese.

The sixth went to Central Europe, speaking the Teutonic, which in modern times is represented in the German, the Dutch, the Frizian, the English, the Scandinavian; which, again, is subdivided into the Danish, the Swedish, the Norwegian and the Icelandic dialects.

And a seventh, speaking the Slavic, which in modern times is represented in the Russian, the Polish, the Czeck, the Servian, the Bulgarian, the Croat and kindred languages.

From this, therefore, it would appear that all the peoples of Europe, with the exception of the Turks, the Magyars of Hungary, and a few smaller groups, as the Laps, the Fins, together with their North-German offshoots, and the Basques or Iberian people, all belong to the great Hindu-European family, and all are related more or less intimately with one another.

They would have us believe, moreover, that the different branches of this great Hindu-European family went out from the parental home carrying with them an original stock of mythological lore; and that the historico-religious traditions to be found among those peoples today are but variants of this common primeval stock, developed and crystallized during the course of their history.

D'Arbois de Jubainville's Deductions

In support of this school of thought we have many notable names, thus: M. D'Arbois de Jubainville, for forty years contributor and editor of the *Reviu Celtique*, published in Paris, in one of his works, and that perhaps the most important, viz: *Les Habitants Primitifs de l'Europe*, after many arguments and etymological deductions, writes: "Such is the sketch we may draw of what was the Hindu-European civilization when, established in Persia and Afghanistan, where then dwelt the descendants of Cham, the Hindu-Europeans spread among the mountains which form the northwest boundary of India, the western boundary of China, and the eastern boundary of Russian Europe. They formed only one people. One day this people separated into two. The one of these peoples inhabit the countries of the West. We give them the name of Euro-

peans. It begins the conquest of Europe. The other had for first home the northern ridge of the Hindu-Cush. Then, without ceasing to occupy its primitive cradle-land, it descended to the south of the Hindu-Cush, to the vicinity of Cabul, and spread over the same latitude to the southern shores of the Caspian Sea. They gave themselves the name of Aryans—Arya; that is, faithful, de-

Max-Muller's and Prof. Rhys' Views.

So, also, Professor Max-Muller in his lecture on the "voted," etc.

Science of Language: "There was a time," says he, "when the first ancestors of the Indians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Slaves, the Celts, and the Germans, were lodged together within the same enclosure; nay, under the same roof." So, also Professor Rhys, and many others; so that it has come to pass with the writers in our reviews and magazines, and even in more ambitious works, to talk of all those peoples as of the Aryan family; the Aryan languages, the Aryan mythology, and so forth.

A Pretty Theory

But, now, before we swallow all this verbiage about Aryan mythology, language, and traditions, written by noted writers, it is good for us to examine the grounds on which they base their assumptions.

It seems a pretty theory, no doubt, and it is supported to a certain extent by the recognized affinity among the languages of those peoples. But, alas, here affinity ends; and we have not a single ascertained historic or politico-religious ground to show that the peoples so enumerated ever formed a political or social unity, or that the nations that inhabit Europe today were ever bound by closer political or social ties than those which bind them in modern times; and I lodge my objection to it in the words of Professor Guest of the University of Cambridge, England: "We may, perhaps, admit that the men who wrote the Vedas, that is, the sacred books of India, called themselves Aryas; that the inhabitants of ancient Media were called, as in Herodotus, (7.66) Aryoi; that a large part of ancient Persia including Bactria was called Aryana; that the modern Persians call their country Iran, and the dis-

tracts occupied by the Turcomans and Mongolians, Turan; and that the Sanscrit-speaking race probably descended into the Punjab by the Northern passes; but I do *not* believe that the races speaking what have been called the Hindu-European languages ever lived a united people in ancient Bactaria, or gave birth in its neighborhood to the peculiar idioms which distinguish these languages. If a writer chose to apply the term Aryan to Sanscrit and the immediately connected dialects, there may perhaps, be no great objection to his doing so; but there is not a tittle of evidence to show that Celt or Teuton, Greek or Latin, ever dwelt east of Arrarat before the conquests of Alexander; and to call these races Aryan involves a serious perversion of history." (*Origines Celticae*, Vol. I., p 335.)

CHAPTER II

The Historical School

I now go on to give the views of the latter school, views with which I may say at once that I am in agreement; though, of course, objections may be taken here and there to contentions which at best are only tentative, in dealing with a subject that is most abstruse, and in which research is by no means yet exhausted.

To begin with, then, the generic name, Celt, has been given to those bands of colonists, who, rightly or wrongly are supposed to have been the earliest inhabitants of central and western Europe. In this connection it is well to remember that Europe, in early classical times, was called *Celtica*. But under the name of Celts were included races of different characteristics, who came west by different routes, and at dates widely separated from one another. Moreover, the term, Celts has sometimes an ethnological meaning, sometimes a political; sometimes they are proper names; sometimes, appellatives, to signify those peoples who were outside the influence of Greek and Roman civilization.

Name Celt Originated With the Ancient Greeks

The name Celt seems first to have been given them in the neighborhood of Marseilles, the ancient Massilia, founded by the Greeks in the sixth century before Christ.

Strabo tells us that the more cultured Greeks called their ruder neighbors, the Narbonnidae, Keltoi, i. e., the inhabitants of the woodland district: We have in the modern Welsh a kindred word *celt*, to signify a convert, from which is derived *Celtiad*, people of the forest. However that may be, Herodotus writing in the sixth century before Christ, gives *Celt* a generic name for the whole race of Celtic peoples.

By the Romans they were called *Galli*, the inhabitants of the Plain; that is, of Lombardy; and, hence, we have in the republican times of Rome the division *Galia Cis-Podana*, and *Galia Trans-Podana*; Gaul on this side of the River Po, and Gaul beyond the Po.

When Caesar undertook the conquest of the tribes bordering his province of Narbonne, he found tribes of the same name as those he was acquainted with on the other side of the Alps, and, hence, he gave them the same generic name of *Galli*; and so the races that the Romans had to deal with were divided into *Galli Cisalpini* et *Transalpini*, and the provinces into *Cisalpine* and *Transalpine* Gaul. The corresponding name among the Greeks was *Galatoi*, and such a designation we have of those races in many Greek writers.

But the generic name given to the race by the Greeks was *Kimmerioi*, as in the *Odyssey* (II. 13.) where the poet carried *Odysseus*

"To the furthest limit of the deep flowing ocean
Where are the people and city of the *Kimmerioi*
Hidden in darkness and cloud."

And the cause of this designation I must now unfold.

Cause of This Designation

If we read the tenth chapter of *Genesis*—the ethnographic chapter, as it is called, of the Bible—we shall find that Gomer, the eldest son of Japheth, had three sons, *Aschenez*, *Riphath* and *Thogorma*. And after enumerating also the sons of the fourth son of Japheth, *Javan*, it continues: "By these were divided the islands of the Gentiles in their lands, every one according to his tongue, and their families in their nations."

What were the "islands of the Gentiles" in the language of the Scripture writer? They were in general the European countries, and this description they were given, because the Israelites, being an inland people, and moreover, the descendants of an inland people, and unacquainted in those ages with the geography of the western world, they gave this designation to the lands of those who came eastward from ships. In the mind then of the Scripture writer, it would seem that in the early centuries after the deluge, Europe was in good part colonized by the descendants of Gomer and Javan. Javan or Ion, we know, was the reputed ancestor of the Greeks, and hence we have the designation of the Ionian people, the Ionian islands, the Ionian archipelago, etc. Furthermore, from one of Javan's sons, Elisha, we have the designation Helespont; and the general name of the Greeks, at the period when the Illiad was composed was Danaoi, from Dodanim, the youngest son of Javan.

The Celts of Asia

Now, as to the designation, Kimmerioi, Josephus tells us that of Gomer's three sons Aschenez, Riphath, and Thogorma, were founded the three confederated races, the Ascanians, or Regines; the Paphalagonians, and the Phruges Phorkus led, And Ascanias the godlike from far Ascania." Those Ascanians lived at the sources of the second book of the Illiad, when describing the nations and leaders who fought at Troy, he says: . . . "The Phruges Phorkus led, and Ascanias the godlike from far Ascania." Those Ascanians lived at the sources of the Tigris, and probably as far north as the Euxine, to which they gave their name. It is called the Ascanian Lake, Pontus Axenos, probably from the Ascanian tribes who settled on its shores, and the modern name of which is the Euxine, or the Black Sea.

Homer also alludes to the Henetroi or Venetoi, that is, the inhabitants of the coast, the Paphlagonians settled by the Euxine, and other tribes of Ascanians, south of Phrygia and adjacent to Piscidia, in Asia Minor.

As to the Phrygians, the descendants of Thorgorma, they called themselves Briges, which in Lydian, in great part a Celtic language, as far as we know from the fragments that have come down to us, signifies freemen, or

hillsmen—mountaineers, and the same meaning has *Ligures*, another designation of certain Celtic peoples.

The Fortunes of the Celts

But let me go on to describe the fortunes of the European Celts, or *Kimmerioi*, with whom we are more intimately interested.

In very ancient times Europe was called *Celtica*, and this because the Celts were for long the predominant race, if not also the first colonists of that continent. Of the three peoples who colonized Europe, the Celts, the *Basques* or *Iberians*, and the *Fins*, the Celts were believed to be the first.

Herodotus tells us that the River *Ister*, that is, the Danube, beginning from among the *Keltoi* and the city *Purene* (*Pyrenees*) “runs through the midst of Europe and divides it.” (4.49) And again, in *Melopotamene*, another of his works, he says: “The *Ister* flows through the whole of Europe taking its rise among the *Keltoi*, who of all the peoples of Europe dwell the furthest towards the setting sun next after *Kimetes*.” (36. 7.) He considered then that a passage reached from the Danube to the Western ocean.

As an *obiter dictum* I would direct attention to the similarity of geographical description of those early Greek writers to that given in our most ancient Irish documents, as the *Book of Invasions*, which I take as a most important witness to the antiquity and the authenticity of our annals and other historic documents—books which the superficial and crudely educated of our day would have us look on as the fabulous productions of a later and credulous period.

The Northern Celts

I have said that certain tribes descended from *Gomer*; namely, the *Regines* or *Ascanians*, the *Paphlagonians*, and the *Phrygians*, dwelt in Asia; and we must believe that their descendants colonize in good part those same regions today.

But very early after the flood, other tribes turned westward and settled in the southern steppes of Russia, on the lower reaches of the *Dneister* and the *Don*.

Whether pressed by the Scythians or from other causes they turned their course westward towards the virgin lands of Central Europe. Now, for those who would travel westward there were from physical causes but two routes left open; that to the south of the great Hercynian forest, and the northern route by the Dneister and the Elbe, to the ocean.

This Hercynian range and forest beginning at the west end, as we consider it today, rises in the Black Forest in Baden and Wurtemberg, continues along the mountains of Bohemia, the Moravian highlands, and the wooded Carpathians, where in the early days of the war those terrible and sanguinary battles between the Russian and Teutonic armies took place, and dies away on the plains of Wallachia or Southern Roumania.

Caesar, with much exaggeration, estimates its width as nine days' march, and its length as sixty. (B. G. 6.25.)

It was a line of mountain forest of impenetrable thickness; so that the only available routes westward were north of it, or south, along the valley of the Danube; and by the former of these the descendants of Gomer must have traveled, if they ever spread from the steppes of Southern Russia; that is, from the Pontic Scythia, to the Cimbric Chersonessus, or Jutland, as it is called in modern times.

We may then suppose that at some remote period, "Gomer and all his bands," as they are called in *Ezschiel* (38.6), crossed the Danube, and journeyed north along the Dnieper to the Ukraine, working their way gradually westward across the headwaters of the Vistula to the Elbe, and so to the ocean. They reach the Netherlands by the northern route; form a great empire in Central Europe; spread themselves south through the Rhineland and Gaul; cross the channel to the neighboring Britain, colonize Ireland in part, and come in touch with Greek civilization in Southern Gaul.

A Second Wave of Celtic Migration

A second wave of Celtic migration took place by the same route many centuries later, when the Kimmerioi or Cimbri, as they were called by the Latins, were expelled from the Crimea by the Scythians of Southern Russia,

These Kimmerioi or Cimbri leave their name indelibly on many countries of Western Europe; and hence, we have the Cimbric Chersonessus, or Jutland; Cambria, the national name of Wales; Cumberland, the land of the Cimbri; and in later Roman history, from about the year 113 B. C., bands of these Cimbri thirty myriads strong, together with their allies the Teutons, defeat the Roman consul Papirius Carbo at Noricum, afterwards carry devastation through Gaul and Spain, till, finally, they are annihilated by Marius at Vercellae, in Northern Italy, in 101 B. C. Many years later Caesar found near the Sambre and the Meuse descendants of the six thousand men whom the Cimbri had left to guard their flocks and herds during these years of their devastating career, and the Cimbri from the German ocean sent an embassy to Augustus to ask pardon for the injuries their forefathers had inflicted on the Romans during that humiliating period of Roman history. And, now, as to the name, Kimmerioi, of which Cimbri is the Latin designation, you see at once that it is but a modification of Gomerioi, or the descendants of Gomer, "K" being a substitute for "G" in Greek and Hebrew.

CHAPTER III

The Southern Celts

I now go on to discuss the course of those Celtic tribes who in early times colonized the countries of Southern Europe; and here, I confess, our information is very obscure and conflicting. What seems certain is that very many centuries before Christ they are found side by side with peoples of other races to have occupied the lands of Southern Greece, Central and Northern Italy, as well as the countries westward to the Iberian Peninsula, and even to Hibernia, the *Ultima Thule* of Eunomius and other classical writers.

Greek and Latin writers make allusions to three successive waves of immigration of the Celtic peoples westward from their Asiatic home.

I have said that antecedent to the Homeric age, and, probably, in the early days after the deluge, tribes belonging to the three confederated nations who claimed descent

from Gomer, occupied several tracts from the sources of the Tigris, westward along the southern shores of the Euxine, and south as far as Piscidia.

An Age of Expansion

It was an age of expansion when the descendants of the patriarch Noah sought out new lands for their growing population which were propagating rapidly under the providential will of heaven. "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and rule over it," was the blessing and command of the Almighty to Noah and his sons, even as it was to the first founder of the human race in Paradise. But tribal jealousies and wars, and upheavals of whole populations, added zest to an instinct and a movement that came from God.

Early writings and traditions, as well Egyptian as Greek, tell of the conquests of the Pharaohs along the countries east of the Mediterranean as far north as Syria and Cilicia, and even to the shores of the Euxine. Among others, an Egyptian people, the Colchoi, intruded themselves among the Japhethic peoples who inhabited the peninsula of Asia Minor, and gave the name Colchis to the country they won by the sword. It was this country of the Colchis that early Greek legend makes the object of the famous expedition of Jason and the Argonauts in search of the golden fleece.

However that may be, antiquarians conjecture that this intrusion of a Chamitic people led to the migration westward not only of the Saspires or Western Iberians to Spain and Portugal, but also of part of the Celtic population.

Besides the Celtic tribes of Asia Minor, there were others in Eastern Europe. Some of these lived in the Carpathians, others in the Crimea and in the steppes of Southern Russia. These, defeated by the Scythians in the sixth century before Christ, fled into Asia. The terror inspired by their uncouth appearance and the lines of wagons and material they carried with them were long remembered by the Greeks of Asia Minor.

First Wave of Celtic Immigration

But long before this, perhaps anterior to the days of Abraham, the first wave of Celtic immigration to Southern Europe took place. I have said that centuries prior to this the Kimmerioi pushed their way westward by the Dnieper and the Elbe to the Netherlands and the ocean. The Ligurian Celts on the other hand came west by the Upper Danube and over the Julian Alps into Italy.

Greek writers tell us that Italy was occupied by three races. The Oinoitroi, early Greek settlers, occupied the south; the Opocoi and other old Italian peoples, as the Sabines, the Samnites, the Latins, etc., occupied the center; and the Umbrians and other Celtic races, called by the Romans the old Galli, the north.

In early Latin times, before Rome was built, the Siculoi, a Ligurian tribe, inhabited Central Italy from Brindisi to Rome. They were expelled by the Pelasgians, or old inhabitants, and fled into Sicily, to which island they gave their name. Part of the tribe, however, maintained themselves at Lake Avernus, near Cumae, the country of the Sybil, who, centuries beforehand, foretold the birth of our Lord.

As to the Umbrians, they are supposed to have settled in Central Italy, at least a thousand years before Christ. The Venetians were the latest of the immigrants to come from the Euxine; and they were possibly expelled as a result of the campaigns of the Assyrian conqueror, Assurhadden, in the seventh century before Christ. We know from Assyrian and Jewish history that the conqueror caused great disturbance among the peoples of Syria and Asia Minor, and prepared for the still greater triumphs of his successor, Nebuchodonozor, the same who destroyed Jerusalem with its temple, and carried the Jews into captivity.

Greece Had Celtic Immigrants

So far for Italy. But Greece also had its Celtic immigrants. The Phrygians driven from the east coast of the Aegean Sea by the Trojans and other Lycian peoples, followed the course of the former Celts and retreated westward into Greece. The most celebrated of their

leaders was Pelops, a Lydian word to signify the Paphlagonian, from which the term Peloponnesus is derived.

The famous Thesus was a great-grandson of this Pelops through his grandfather Pathaes, King of Troezen. Athenaeus (14.21) tells us that everywhere in the Peloponnesus, and especially in Lacedemon, you might see great tumuli which they called the graves of the Phrygians who followed Pelops into Greece.

And here perhaps I may remark a striking likeness of achievement between the Phrygians, and the pre-Milesian peoples of Ireland. It was they who built those wondrous tumuli of Newgrange, and Nouth and Douth, and Magh Turah, and hundreds of others that stud the country, the greatest in Western Europe, and to be compared in colossal size only with the Pyramids of Egypt. They have been always recognized as the graves of dead kings and warriors.

The last named area especially, the scene of the great battle between the Firbolgs and the Tuatha De Danaans, which took place close on 2000 years B. C., is strewn all over with an extraordinary collection of sepulchral monuments, "the largest collection," says the great antiquarian, Dr. Petrie, "and probably, with the exception of that of Carnac, in Brittany, the most remarkable in the world."

As bearing on this subject of achievement perhaps I may be here permitted to remark that according to great authorities such as Keating, the Venerable Bede, and others, backed by the statement in the *Lcabhar Gabhala*, or *Book of Invasions*, going back to the fourth century, and compiled from still earlier works, Brython Maol (Brythan the Bald) after the disastrous battle of Magh Turah (the first battle) fled with part of the host of the Nemedians to Alba, or Scotland, whence, after a short sojourn, he crossed to the continent, and, with his people, colonized what was afterwards called from him this same Britannia Minor or Britany. Part of their descendants afterwards returned to the island whence they came and gave it also the name Britain, Britannia Major, or Great Britain. The Welsh, the representatives of the ancient Britons, acknowledge this, and look to

Britany as the cradle-land of their race, and they speak fundamentally the same language as the Breton people.

Other bands of descendants of this people returned centuries afterwards to Ireland and formed one of the contending parties at the second battle of Magh Turah, the tumuli strewn area mentioned above.

To those and other monuments of a nameless antiquity, the sweet singer, Thomas D'Arcy Magee, alludes in his magnificent poem "THE CELTS." It runs in part as follows:

"Long, long ago, beyond the misty space
Of twice a thousand years,
In Erin old, there dwelt a mighty race,
Taller than Roman spears.
Like oaks and towers they had a giant grace;
Were fleet as deers.
With winds and waves they made their bidding place,
These western shepherd seers.
"Great were their deeds, their passions, and their sports.
With clay and stone
They piled on strath and shore those mystic forts
Not yet o'erthrown;
On cairn-crowned hills they held their council-courts;
While youths alone,
With giant dogs, explored the elk resorts,
And brought them down."

CHAPTER IV

The Round Towers of Ireland

Must we attribute also to the same old peoples those other imperishable monuments of antiquity, the round towers of Ireland?

I am aware that the great Irish antiquarian, George Petrie, attributes to them a Christian and ecclesiastical origin. But apart from the great authority of his name, his arguments in support of this view seem to carry little weight. Rather, he seems to have overlooked absolutely convincing proofs to the contrary. True, they are always found in conjunction with ecclesiastical structures of some kind; some of them even bear Christian emblems, and in times of stress they were applied to ecclesiastical purposes; but to accommodate pagan works and customs to Christian uses, was but the usual practice of the church everywhere,

Is it not a little disconcerting to find that while we know who built the smallest and most primitive of the churches, oratories, and houses, adjoining these towers, the builders of the towers themselves are never mentioned?

Again, Diodorus Siculus, a Roman writer who lived in the time of our blessed Lord, after narrating that Ireland was of the same size as his own country, Sicily, says that it abounded in round towers wherein the druids and priests sang to the music of harps the praises of Apollo.

Once again, the *Annals of Ulster* chronicle the event of a great earthquake which occurred in the year A. D. 448, that is six years after St. Patrick came to Ireland, which overthrew no less than fifty-seven of those towers. They certainly were not built during these six years?

If they were of ecclesiastical origin where throughout the church did their peculiar style of architecture come from? Whereas, we know that the countries formerly occupied by Celtic peoples, such as Bavaria, Switzerland, Italy, Belgium, Scotland, present, though on a limited scale, towers of a somewhat similar figure and construction.

To the vast antiquity and imperishable strength of those old towers the great Irishman, Denis Florence MacCarthy, pays tribute in the following words:

"The pillar towers of Ireland, how wondrously they stand,
By the lakes and rushing rivers, through the valleys of our land;
In mystic file throughout the Isle they lift their heads sublime,
These grey old pillar temples—these conquerors of time.

"Beside these grey old pillars how perishing and weak,
The Roman's arch of triumph, the temple of the Greek,
And the gold domes of Byzantium, and the pointed Gothic spires?
All are gone, one by one, but the temples of our sires.

* * * * *

"Two favorites hath old time—the pyramids of Nile,
And the mystic temples of our own dear Isle—
As the breeze o'er the seas where the halcyon has its nest,
Thus, time o'er Egypt's tombs, and the temples of the west!

"The names of their founders have vanished in the gloom.
Like the dry brand in the fire, or the body in the tomb:
But today in the ray, their shadows still they cast,
These temples of forgotten gods—these relics of the past."

Pre-Melesian Invaders of Ireland

Four of those old races, the Parthalonians, the Nemedians, the Firbolgs, and the Tuatha De Danaans, are related to have originally come from Greece, and their racial legends and geographical descriptions correspond largely with those of the earliest Greek writers. The Parthalonians, the earliest of the invaders, were expelled from Greece because of a parricide committed by their leader, Parthalon, a name which sounds so much like a Grecian one.

But the anger of God overtook them, and the whole colony died of a plague sent on them, it was said, in punishment of this crime, and they were buried in a place that is called to this day, *Tallaght na tuatha Parthalon*, the plague-grave of the Parthalonians. This plague-grave I know well, for I lived for years in its vicinity. Scores of those graves have been opened in recent times, and urns that contained the ashes of the dead have been preserved and may be seen today in the national museum of Dublin. Many of them are fashioned in the best style of art, and are little inferior in workmanship to the best Etruscan or Greek models.

Three of the other invaders of Hibernia, the Nemedians, the Firbolgs, and the Thuatha De Danaans, the people of the Goddess Dana, also came originally from Greece, or from the countries bordering on it, and the articles of workmanship of those latter people especially; the bronze swords, and spearheads, and shields, and the gold trumpets, and spinuli, and cymbals, and other objects of which Ireland possesses a magnificent collection, fashioned, according to all antiquarians who have studied them, at least fifteen hundred years B. C., are unexcelled for beauty and perfection of workmanship.

CHAPTER V

The Celts of Spain

I have little more to add of antiquarian interest concerning the Ambrones, or Ligures, the Southern Celts; for both those names are applied to the whole race; Ambrones, i. e. G'Omerones from Gomer, and Ligures, the

hillsmen from the highlands of Asia Minor. Suffice it to say that they worked their way westward as well by sea, as by migrations by the lands north of the Mediterranean and the Pyrenees; perhaps, also by Northern Africa, as is related of the Milesians in the book of their wanderings. Many entered Spain by the mouth of the Tagus, spread themselves in a long period of time eastward to the sources of the Douro and the Ebro where mingling their blood with the Iberians they formed the noble Celtiberian people.

Many reasons combine to show that they were the predominant race in the Peninsula; Appian and others place their coming as antecedent to the Tyrian occupation, and hence Aristophanes speaks of Spain as one of the three forelands projecting from the north as the Ligurian, in connection with the Italian and the Peloponnesian peninsulas. These Celtiberians of Central Spain are prominent in all subsequent Spanish history, and still form the basis of modern Spanish blood. Others of the tribes reach south as far as Cadiz. The Lucitanoi or Portuguese are an undoubted Celtic race, though today they are much diluted with Iberian, Vandal and even African blood, as a result of the long Moorish occupation of the country, as were also the Tourdetani, the Berones, the Cantabri, the Conici, and other Spanish tribes who are spoken of by Strabo and other classical writers.

The Famous Milesian Family

From here, according to a well-founded opinion, they crossed to Ireland, and settled there as the famous Milesian family. That such is probable, we learn as well from the universal tradition of the Irish people themselves, as from local nomenclature and tribal and judicial arrangements reaching back many centuries B. C. That such an invasion was not only possible, but probable, we learn from the circumstances of the people and the time.

The Tyrians, centuries before the age of Solomon, had formed colonies on the coasts of the countries bordering on the Mediterranean. One of these was Emporium, to the eastern coast of Spain, on the site of the modern Barcelona; another, Tartesus, was founded near Cadiz. So important was the commerce carried on with

this distant port that the Mediterranean was called *Marc Tartessum*, the sea of Tharhish.

When Jonas was thrown overboard by the Tyrian sailors, they were making not for Tarsis in Cilicia, as is wrongly stated by Josephus, but for the port of Tartessus, or Cadiz, then the commercial center of Western Europe.

Commerce Carried on by Tyrian Merchants

The commerce carried on by the Tyrian merchants with the British Isles was directed to Hibernia rather than to Great Britain, and they could not but have carried the tidings of the Noble Isle of the west, *Innis Ealga*, only four days' sail westward, to the enterprising Celts of the neighboring country. Our ancient books, corrupt or incorrect as some of them evidently are, (I am speaking of events that took place at least 3500 years ago), give long accounts of the wandering of our Milesian ancestors from Scythia by Egypt and northern Africa, before their arrival in Spain and the founding of their capital city, Brigantia. They were called Scots, and Gaels; Scots probably from *scuthe*, the Celtic word for wanderer, and Gael from *Gadaelus Gaedhel*, a famous leader, and Milesians from *Mile*, the warrior of Spain, whose sons were the leaders of the expedition. Does this Brigantia intimate to us that they were of the race of the Briges of Phrygians, the ancient race who of old peopled the highlands of western Asia?

What Is a Racial Legend?

All this is but a racial legend that for centuries floated among the population before it was committed to writing.

But what is a racial legend? It will be found in most cases to be a fable which symbolizes history, or what are supposed to be historic facts, and as such worthy of our most careful consideration.

And we know that many legends that only a generation ago were held as myths of the imagination have in our time, through research and discovery, been proved to be founded on indubitable historical facts.

A remarkable illustration of this was found in the *cairn-aon-fir*, the one-man cairn, one of the great

sepulchral mounds on the scene of the battle of Magh Turah, above mentioned. Some antiquarians living in the first half of the last century, wishing to test the truth of the appellation which must have come down from the era of the famous battle itself nearly 4000 years ago, excavated into its interior. True enough, the remains of one man only were found, although it is well known that in other such instances, as in the great sepulchral mounds of *Brugh-na-Boinne*, in Meath, excavations revealed the presence of several such remains. Be that as it may, in the case we treat of, the poet has but caught the spirit of our race when, in his beautiful lyric, he wrote:

"They came from a land beyond the sea,
And now o'er the western main
Set sail in their good ships gallantly
From the sunny land of Spain.

"'Oh! where's the Isle we've seen in dreams,
Our destined home or grave?"
Thus sang they, as, by the morning's beams,
They swept the Atlantic wave.

"And lo! where afar o'er ocean shines
A sparkle of radiant green,
As though in that deep lay em'rald mines
Whose light through the wave was seen.

"'Tis Innisfail! 'Tis Innisfail!"
Rings o'er the echoing sea;
While bending to heaven the warriors hail
That home of the brave and free.

"Then turn they unto the Eastern wave,
Where now their day-god's eye
A look of such sunny omen gave
As lighted up sea and sky;

"Nor frown was seen thro' sky or sea,
Nor tear o'er leaf or sod,
When first on their Isle of Destiny
Our great forefathers trod."

CHAPTER VI

The Celtic Empire

I have now to give you an account of Celtic history in the later centuries of its power when the Celts formed a great empire in Central Europe. The early growth

and consolidation of this empire is lost in the obscurity of remote ages. What seems demonstrated is that as early as 2000 years B. C. they occupied the vast tracts of country lying between the upper reaches of the Danube, the Rhine and the Baltic; that for many centuries they were possessed of a wise system of administration, with great political unity, and that they acknowledged one supreme ruler; that they long held the Teutonic peoples in subjection, a subjection which has impressed itself indelibly on the Teutonic language. This is seen in the many Celtic loan words pertaining to law, government, political institutions, medicine, and war, remaining in the German language today.

For long the Continental Celts kept up friendly relations with the Greeks and Macedonians on the one hand; while they carried on successful wars with the Illyrians, the Etruscans, and the Carthagenians on the other.

They were not so fortunate in their quarrels with the Jews; for in the *Second Book of Machabees* we learn that they, the Jews, using but six thousand fighting men, by the help of God slew a hundred and twenty thousand Galatians in the area of Babylonia. (Mach. viii:20.) Their power seems to have reached its highest development some 400 B. C. At this time their empire extended throughout the greater part of Central and Southern Europe.

Their Civilized Manners, Justice, and Hospitality

Of their civilized manners, justice, and hospitality to strangers, Greek writers of this century speak with commendation, and remark that they observed nearly the same manners and customs as themselves. And it is told by later Greek writers, how by their help Philip of Macedon was enabled to shake off the tribute which the Illyrians had imposed on his country. And, as to his son Alexander, he did not think it prudent to set out upon his expedition into Asia without having first assured himself of the friendship of his Celtic neighbors; and amongst the many envoys who came to Babylon to salute the conqueror of Persia appeared their representatives also.

When for the first time we have a clear view of their position, their headquarters are in the country which the

Romans called "Gallia Transalpina," which answers roughly to the modern country of France. It was thence that they issued in swarms to seek adventure and spoils in other lands.

To the west, branches of the race separated themselves from their Continental brethren, crossed over the narrow strip of seat that separates England from the continent, and peopled Britain, and part of Ireland.

To the south, they poured over the Pyrenees and joined their blood with the Ligurian tribes already there.

To the southeast, other numerous hosts crossed the Alps, occupied almost the whole of Northern Italy, comprising the provinces of Piedmont, Lombardy, and Emilia, called by the Romans "Gallia Cisalpina," and whose southern frontier was the little river Rubicon, famous afterwards as the crossing of which was the formal act of war committed by Caesar against his mother country, Rome.

War With Rome.

The first time that the Celts came into conflict with the growing power of Rome was about 400 B. C. The circumstances which led to that quarrel were somewhat like those that, in our mother country, led to the disastrous Anglo-Norman invasion. They were these: There was a certain citizen of Clusium, a city in Etruria, called Aruns. This man was appointed guardian of one Lucumo, who, when he grew up, carried off his guardian's wife, and lived with her in open profligacy.

The outraged husband, finding his efforts to obtain redress from the magistrates of his native city vain, crossed the Alps, his mules laden with the rich and tempting viands of Italy, and invited one of the Gallic tribes to come and help him to obtain revenge for the insult offered him, promising them in return rich spoils and the fertile lands of the Clusines. He did not speak to deaf ears. Brennus, their king, crossed the Alps at the head of a powerful army, ravaged the territories of the Clusines, and laid siege to their capital, Clusium, itself.

The Clusines, on their part, who were the allies of the Roman republic, hurriedly sent messengers to Rome to complain of the incursion of the Gauls, and to ask their

assistance. The Romans in return sent three envoys to the Gauls; but they so far forgot their character as envoys that they joined the Clusines in a sally from the besieged city, in which, among others, a Gallic chieftain was slain. Brennus, seeing the envoys take a hostile part, at once sounded a retreat, chose out a picked body of warriors of giant stature, and sent them to Rome to demand that the envoys should be given up to their vengeance. The Romans saw that an act of war had been committed by their envoys against a people with whom they were at peace; but, yet, they were unwilling to give up to the vengeance of their enemies those who had held such high office in the state, and who were, moreover, of the noble family of the Fabii. When Brennus heard that his demand was not to be complied with, he raised the siege of Clusium, and at once gave the order to advance on Rome. In a few days he defeated the Roman army before the gates of Rome itself, entered the city, sacked it and burned it to the ground.

Legends of the Sack of Rome

I have not time to relate the many legends that are told of this famous sack—of the slaughter of the eighty Roman senators in the market place—of the repulse of the Gauls from the capital effected through the gabbling of the geese, sacred to the goddess of Juno—of that told of Brennus, who, when the Roman tribune complained that he used false scales in weighing the thousand pounds weight of gold exacted by the victors, the king threw his sword into the balance, exclaiming: “*Vae victis!*” “Woe to the conquered!” words that have since descended as a proverb.

Neither have I time to relate the chief events in the subsequent wars of the Celts with the Roman republic in this century, when we are told by Livy that they ravaged the territories of the Romans five times, even to the walls of Rome. How powerful must have been the Celts at this period, we may learn when we have the authority of classical writers for stating that even at this early period of her power, Rome, together with her allies, could put close on 800,000 troops into the field; and it was a common saying in later times that, with other peoples,

the Romans fought for conquest, but, with the Celts, they fought for very existence.

Revolt of the Germans

The stability of the Celtic empire seems to have been broken by a successful revolt of the Germans against their domination, sometime about 300 years B. C. "It was in consequence of this blow," says Dr. Douglas Hyde, in his *Literary History of Ireland*, "that the Celtic Belgæ were obliged to withdraw from the right bank of the Rhine to the left, and to occupy the country between it, the Seine, and the Marne; whilst other tribes settled themselves along the Rhine, and others again marched eastward by the Danube, caused great devastation in Italy and Greece, pillaged the temple of Delphi, and finally settled down and founded the famous colony of Galicia, the people to whom, over three centuries later, Saint Paul preached the Gospel and addressed one of his greater epistles, and whose descendants were found by St. Jerome at the end of the fourth century, still speaking their own Celtic tongue.

Celtic Tribe Settles in Ireland

About this time also a large body of Gauls or Celts came to Ireland and were assigned territories in the kingdom of Leinster. This was during the reign of the High King, Labrad Laincheach. They brought with them weapons of a different pattern to that used by the native tribes, as is taken notice of by our writers, and their descendants three centuries later fought with distinction on the side of Queen Maeve in the epic war of the *Tain Bo Coulinge*, which culminated in the famous battle of Ros-na-ree. Another monument attesting the advent of the Gauls into Ireland at this time are the Galluids, or large pillar stones erected to mark the limits of territory. They are said to have been first set up by a Gallic chieftain named Failbe, and they are still very numerous in various parts of the country.

Rome and Carthage

The part which the Celts played in the titanic struggle between the rival powers of Rome and Carthage is re-

markable. In fact, it may be said that the second and greatest of the Punic wars was carried on by the latter chiefly through means of the forces raised in the countries of the Celts. For, with the exception of an inconsiderable body of Numidian horse and Carthaginian foot, the armies of Hannibal were composed chiefly of Celts recruited in Cisalpine Gaul and of Celt-Iberians from Spain. It was with those warriors that the great commander, himself on his mother's side a Celt, and married to a Celtic lady, performed the prodigious feat, hitherto considered impracticable, of crossing the Alps with a great army, and attacking Rome in the center of her dominions. It was these warriors that enabled that great master of battle to keep his standard floating for twenty-two years in the very heart of the Roman empire. It was with these forces that he was enabled to win his famous battles, Trebia, Tracymene and Cannae, that most terrible overthrow ever sustained by the Roman arms, where she left seventy thousand of her choicest troops dead upon the field.

The Conquest of Gaul

I pass over the intermediate periods of Celtic history to say a word about that final struggle of the Celts for existence, when at last they were overpowered and absorbed in the imperial power of Rome.

It was half a century before the Christian era that Julius Caesar undertook the conquest of Transalpine Gaul. Rome was at this time in the zenith of her greatness. She had overcome all her enemies—east, west, and south. Her empire was bounded on the east by the Tigris and the Caspian. She possessed herself of the whole north of Africa from Egypt to the Atlantic. She pushed her conquests northwards beyond the Isar and the Danube; while Spain, from the Pyrenees to Gibraltar, acknowledged her imperial sway. Caesar, the most ambitious of Rome's generals, the greatest commander of antiquity, resolved to add Gallia Transalpina to the dominions of Rome. The pretext was at hand. The quarrel commenced with the Roman commander's prohibition to the Helvetians, a powerful tribe, to pass through the Roman province of Lyons from their pent-up valleys of Switzerland, to seek

more fertile territories in Gaul. The Swiss were beaten. The quarrel deepened and extended, till, finally, all the Gallic tribes from the Mediterranean to the Rhine were involved.

I cannot in the course of a short lecture pursue the history of that tremendous struggle. Let it suffice to say that it took all the power of Rome, then at the height of her greatness, and led by the most consummate general of antiquity, eight years to finally subdue the Gallic tribes. And we can form some idea of the power of the Celts, and of the magnitude of that terrible struggle when I say that in these eight years, Caesar subdued three hundred nations; took eight hundred towns and hamlets and defeated three millions of men, a third of whom were killed in battle, and another third of whom were led into captivity.

Characteristics of the Celts

Perhaps I might now conclude by giving some description of those famous peoples as it is depicted by a modern historian, and as it is gathered from the classic writers of Greece and Rome.

"They appear," says Mr. Gannon, in his "Review of Ancient Ireland," "as a host of gigantic warriors with fair hair clustering around their white foreheads, with fierce blue eyes, and long mustachios, adorned with rings and necklaces of gold.

We see them gathering together and singing the hymns before battle, then brandishing their long swords and axes, and falling with terrific shouts upon the Greek phalanx, or the Roman legion. They long disdained to wear any kind of armor. Sometimes they even flung away their mantle and tunic and rushed naked to the charge. A wild contempt of danger, headlong courage at the onset, unsustained by discipline, characterized their mode of warfare. In the time of peace their habits were simple. They tilled the earth but little, preferring the indolence and ease of a pastoral life. Their favorite intellectual exercise was a rude form of oratory, in which, at the head of armies, or in other assemblies, their leaders found scope for their natural eloquence.

For the rest, their qualities showed themselves on the

surface. Their nature was joyous and impetuous. Theirs was not the stoicism of the Roman or of the Teuton; but, rather, the sensibility and passion of the Greek. They laughed and wept freely. Possessed of keen wit and intelligence, and impressionable beyond other races, they could, when they chose, quickly imbibe the spirit of a superior culture and civilization. But they were under the sway of impulse and a warm imagination which often clouded their intellect and weakened their judgment.

To these characteristics they added an instinctive repugnance to discipline, strange fickleness, and the spirit of dis-union; qualities which would suddenly disappear into the background whenever they found themselves under the rule of a born leader. Politically, they were divided into tribes dwelling in fortified hamlets and towns. Each tribe had a chieftain or petty king, who was assisted in the government by an aristocratic class. The tribes were loosely united in confederacies, constantly at war with one another.

Such were the ancient Celts in the days of their independence and their power. Such were that brilliant, daring, restless people, who had roamed and conquered everywhere from the Euxine to the Atlantic, till, at last, they were themselves conquered and well-nigh absorbed in the imperial growth of Rome.

Laus Deo Semper.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

DOCTRINAL DISCOURSES FOR THE SUNDAYS AND THE CHIEF FESTIVALS OF THE YEAR

In five volumes

Price \$1.50 per vol. First and second volumes now out.

From the *American Ecclesiastical Review*, June, 1918:

Priests and lay readers who are in quest of good material for reflection on subjects that concern the welfare of the soul will find these discourses to their taste, both in matter and form.

The Rev. Peter C. Yorke, D. D., San Francisco, thus writes:

This addition to Father Skelly's devotional and patriotic writings is worthy of his high reputation. Bishop MacDonald of Victoria, who is by no means an indulgent critic, characterizes it as "sound in learning, copious and varied in material, easy and flowing in style." As becomes a Dominican, the theology is saturated with St. Thomas, and in these days of third and fourth hand erudition no greater praise could be given. We strongly recommend this collection of edifying, beautiful and truly learned Doctrinal Discourses.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR
THE FALSITY OF THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

Pp. 84. Price, 15 cents.

The Right Rev. Edward J. O'Dea, D. D., Bishop of Seattle, Wash., thus writes:

Dear Reverend Father:

I have read with much profit and pleasure your learned and interesting articles in the CATHOLIC NORTHWEST PROGRESS, on the "Origin and Antiquity of Man."

Your excellent articles on this much abused subject should be presented in proper form by having them printed, bound, and distributed generously, that the general public may avail themselves of the truthful information they contain. I sincerely hope you will be able to do this for the cause of truth and science.

Yours sincerely in S o. Corde Je u.,

EDW. J. O'DEA,

Bishop of Seattle.

The Very Rev. Wilfred Leshar, O. P. S. T. L., Hinckley, England:

Since writing to you I have read more fully your work on Evolution and I must write and tell you how much I like it. It contains a masterly exposition of the question, and brings out the features on which a refutation rests.

**ST. DOMINIC AND THE ROSARY; OR, WAS HE ITS
FOUNDER?**

Pp. 84. Price 15 cents.

The Most Rev. Louis Theissling, O. P. S. T. M., Apostolic Visitor, now Master General, thus writes:

(Translation.)

Rev. and Dear Father:

I thank you affectionately for sending me your studies so interesting on our Holy Father, St. Dominic, and his Rosary.

I have read them with the most lively interest, with the greatest pleasure.

*You do not strike with a dead hand. You defend our traditions so energetically and with such success that all the children of our Holy Father owe you an eternal gratitude. * * **

FR. LOUIS THEISSLING, O. P.

THE WOES OF IRELAND

Pp. 40. Price, 6 cents.

Per hundred copies, \$3.50.

*As an abridged history of the Irish race it will be always a valuable handbook, even after the stirring events that called it into being shall have passed. * * * The whole work is the most damning indictment of the treatment meted out to a small nation by a more powerful one in the whole range of history.—THE LEADER, San Francisco.*

Published by the Dominican Sisters, Aquinas Academy, 11th and G. Sts. N., Tacoma, Wash., U. S. A.



HA
S

Skelly, Andrew Maria
The Celtic race.

428050

University of Toronto
Library

**DO NOT
REMOVE
THE
CARD
FROM
THIS
POCKET**



